

CHAPTER-1

MADURAI IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The History of Madurai is deeply tied with Hinduism due to the religious traditions which existed since the birth of the region. Ritualistic and customary behaviours have been followed for millennia. The diversity of religion, culture, nationality, and social status that coexist peacefully in the area is proudly displayed on the streets of Madurai.¹ However, Madurai can brag of its overwhelming number of practising Hindus based on a visible religious majority.² In Madurai, communal temples or shrines are easily available for Hindus to visit on a daily basis. But most practicing Hindus still have smaller shrines, with idols, sculptures and paintings of deities, in their homes consistent with the belief that wherever God will be a space of protection, security, and prosperity.³ The devoted Hindus may prefer to carry out religious rituals at home in their own personal shrines, including praying, offering fresh flowers and food, and receiving blessings.⁴ The Temples provide an opportunity of massive communal gatherings and highly personalised individual religious experiences.⁵ In Madurai, Hindu temples are dispersed

1. Abbe.J.A.Dubois, ***Hindu Manners Customs and Ceremonies***, New delhi, 1990.
p.125

2. Altekhar AS, ***Position of Women in Hindu Civilization***, New delhi, 1959, p.337.

3. Desai SA, ***Mulla's Principles Hindu Law, vol. II***, Lexis NexisButterworths
Wadhwa, Nagpur, 2005 p.156.

4. Abbe.J.A.Dubois, op.cit., p.98

5. Banod P.R, ***The History of Hindu Law***, 1985, Newdelhi, p.302.

across the city in such an approachable fashion that most devout Hindus prefer to visit the closest temple every day in addition to a personal shrine at home.⁶ Due to the presence of such a sizable Hindu population and the temple's religious infrastructure, Madurai continues to be home to a distinctive temple culture that combines both individual and communal religious experiences.⁷ For this reason alone, temple complex are designed for a clean transition between religious and urban space, as well as to provide a comfortable environment.⁸ Ancient South Indian literature denotes that the religious experience in Hinduism has been deeply interwoven in the way cities are designed. The architecture in the city provides the religion with shelter and security.⁹ The earliest records of Hindu practise, denotes that a major shrine serve to protect the dynastic ruler's respective Gods and Goddesses, as divinity would take responsibility for the welfare of the town and people.¹⁰ A city without the safeguard of Gods would be vulnerable to any harms.¹¹ Though a temple was built here from at least as early as the 11th century, when Madurai was the capital of the Pandyan dynasty, most of the structures seen today were built in the later 16th and 17th century during the period of Nayaks rule. But the architectural history of this great south Indian temple does not end in the

6. Abbe.J.A.Dubois, Op.cit.,p.90.

7. A.K. Paranthamanar, **Madurai NayakkarVaralaru** (Tamil), Chennai, 1966
p.229.

8. Ibid.,p.331.

9. Narasaiah ,Aalavai – **Madurai ManagarathinKadhai**.(Tamil)2009, Madurai,p.85.

10. Altekar AS,.Op.cit.,p.56

11. D.Devakunjari, **Madurai through the Ages**, MeenakshiSundareswarar
Thirukkcoil, Madurai, 2004, pp.190 – 216.

17th century, for significant additions were made during the period of British colonial rule. Based on the most well-known example of a religious city, Madurai, the basic model for a 'temple town' consists of a religious complex of four protective walls surrounded by a series of larger and smaller shrines for worship of the various Hindu deities. A large tower or gopuram, often ranging in height from 50 to 250 feet, serves as a transition from the end of a long temple street tightly knit into the fabric to the temple's sacred entrance.¹² The facades of the towers are beautifully carved with decorative references to Hindu mythology which is recorded in traditional Hindu books.¹³ The temple tower's monumentality provides a permanent presence for city dwellers and visitors to navigate. The Streets radiate from the temple, run parallel to the temple walls, and eventually lead to the main gopurams which separate the city from divinity.¹⁴ This system allows the temple complex of the city in an orderly manner.¹⁵ The temple theppakulam, also known as the stepped tank, is a sizable well of water which is an important part of the Madurai Meenakshi temple. A devotee is not allowed to visit the shrine without taking a bath, as is customary in Hinduism. Ancient architects built enormous temple tanks so that visitors could bath in holy water for religious purposes before entering the temple to pray and worship. The design made it possible for a big group to

12. K. Devaraj, *Theriyatha Madurai Seithigal* (Tamil), Madurai, 1980, p.16.

13. S. Sambasivam, *Maanagar Madurai* (Tamil), Madurai, 1960, p.27.

14. D. Devakunjari, Op.cit., p.56

15. R. SathyanathaAiyar, *History of the Nayaks of Madura*, University of Madras, 1980, p.37

congregate and take simultaneous baths, serving Madurai's sizable religious community. Temple tanks have performed useful role as water reservoirs during Madurai's notorious monsoon seasons. It also allowed the local population to gather and store drinkable water to drought.¹⁶ Religious ceremonies or pujas, are often performed by temple priests in Madurai who have formal education in Hindu Vedic texts.¹⁷ The common trend running through all Hindu pujas in Madurai, however, is offering and receiving Flowers, fruits, cooked food, new clothing, sacred ashes, water, fire, and many other natural products will be offered by a devotee. Offerings are given as gift in praise of God to receive blessings in return. The majority of fresh items are bought from Madurai's market before entering the temple. These offerings must adhere to strict Hindu standards. The rituals must be done only on auspicious and suitable days, according to the Hindu lunar calendar.¹⁸ Processions, gatherings, grand ceremonies, and mass commerce are the main components of religious festivals in Madurai. In festival processions Hindus walk clockwise around the temple complex. During these parades, temple priests and ardent devotees carry idols or sculptures of temple deities in decorated chariots or palanquins.¹⁹ A temple procession in Madurai allow the entire community to take part in transporting the gods across the city. The celebration includes a

16. Robert Sewell, **List of Antiquities**, Vol.II, Madras, p.268.

17. N. Jagadeesan, **History of Sri. Vaishnavism in the Tamil Country**, Madurai, 1977, p.36.

18. R. Nagaswamy, **The Art and Culture of Tamilnadu**, Delhi, 1980, p.116.

19. Madura Collectorate Records, Tamil Nadu State Archives (TNSA), Chennai, (Madura CR), Vol. 4343B, pp. 272–276, 26th March 1847.

caricatured coronation ceremony of goddess Meenakshi of her marriage. It is a wonderful spectacle to behold, where the devotees relive the legends repeatedly every year, making the tales of goddess Meenakshi and that of Lord Alagar. The festival is celebrated in the month of Chithirai²⁰ of the traditional Tamil calendar. It is the first month of the Tamil calendar, and the festivities are celebrated for the whole month. The exact dates of the beginning and end of Chithirai vary in the Gregorian calendar. However, it generally falls in April and May. Broadly, the Chithirai festival has been bifurcated into two parts of fifteen days each. The first fifteen days of the festival are spent in celebrating the investiture of goddess Meenakshi as well as in celebrations of the goddess's marriage with Lord Sundareswara. Whereas, the last fifteen days of the festival are celebrated in remembrance of the journey of Lord Alagar²¹ from AlagarKoyil's Kallalagar temple to the city of Madurai. As the festival marks the wedding of Lord Sundareswara and Goddess Meenakshi in Madurai, it is celebrated in the city of Madurai. The festivities begin from the Meenakshi Temple in the Vaiagi village of Madurai and take to the streets of the city as well as the Vaigai River as the celebration continues. It was a grand festival. The

20. Chithirai Festival, also known as ChithiraiThiruvizha, MeenakshiKalyanam or Meenakshi Thirukalyanam, is an annual Tamil Hindu celebration in the city of Madurai during the month of April. The festival, celebrated during the Tamil month of Chithirai, is associated with the Meenakshi Temple, dedicated to the goddess Meenakshi, a form of Parvati and her consort Sundareswar, a form of Shiva. The festival lasts for one month. The first 15 days mark the celebrations of the coronation of Meenakshi as the divine ruler of Madurai and her marriage to Sundareswar. The next 15 days mark the celebrations of the journey of Kallalagar or Alagar (a form of the god Vishnu) from his temple in AlagarKoyil to Madurai.

21. AlagarPerumal (Kallazhagar) is often the Kuladev (clan god) of families from the Kallar community (and some Agamudaiyars and KonarPillais). Telugu families in Madurai also have AlagarPerumal as their Kuladeivam. Often they are Gollas in origin but belong to castes such as Gavara and Baliya today.

beauty of the temple in Madurai town is delicately interlaced with the devotees life. Religious life cannot exist without commerce, given the sensational flavour of Hindu festivals and ceremonies. Informal and semi-permanent market places frequently squat immediately outside the Madurai meenakshi temple entrance to provide for the fresh and manufactured goods required for most services, ensuring a constant supply and ease of access. This allows any devotee to purchase what they require at stalls before entering the sacred space, creating an interesting environment on the main temple street.²² The main temple street, also known as Sannadhi Street, is frequently lined with permanent, air-conditioned stores that dissolve into informal vendor stalls as one approaches the temple gopuram and gateway into the temple.²³ The street sellers have been caught encroaching on temple grounds, disrespecting the sacredness of the place of worship. The Meenakshi Temple in Madurai, chose to temporarily address this issue by extending the temple complex with a pillared hall known as Pudhumandapam to accommodate an organised marketplace.²⁴ Madurai is called by various names like Athens of the East, Naanmaadakoodal meaning the junction of four towers, refers to the four major

22. T.G.S. BalaramIyer, ***History and Description of Sri Meenakshi Temple*** ,Madurai, , 2013.p.57

23. R.K.K. Rajarajan&JeyapriyaRajarajan, ***Minākiṣi-Sundareśvara: the Tiruvīlaiyāṭar Purāṇa*** in Letters, Design and Art, Delhi, 2013, Cjaps. I & II

24. Devakunjari, D., ***Madurai Though the Ages from Earliest Times to 1801 A.D.***, Society for Archaeological, Historical and Epigraphical Research, Madras, 1979, p.140.

temples for which Madurai was known for a living legendary city of in the modern world. It is popularly called as Thiruvilanagaram or city of festivals. It is a well known pilgrimage centre of South India. For last two tourists years Madurai has been served a great centre of Dravidian culture and civilization. The famous Meenakshi Sundaresevarar temple, the two abodes of Lord Murukan and number of puranic temples are located within the Madurai region.²⁵ These temples are enhancing the divinities of Madurai. Since the ancient times of Madurai large number of spiritualists came to visit in these holy places. Tevaram, the 7th- or 8th-century Tamil compositions on Shiva by the three prominent Nayanars (Saivites), namely Appar ,Sundarar and Thirugnanasambandar, address the city as Thirualavai. Malligai Managar (City of Jasmine), KoodalManagar (City of Junction) and Koil Nagar (Temple city).Marco Polo was a Venetian traveler who visited Madurai during 1288 A.D. to 1293 A.D. The travel account of Marco Polo contains basic information about the medieval Madurai, Which was known to them as *Ma''bar*(Mabar). Marco Polo says that *Ma''bar* was one of the great provinces of the greatest Indian and also the best of all the Indies and this province is the finest and noblest in the world.²⁶ The term „*Ma''bar*“is an Arabic word used by Marco Polo denoted as Madurai. But, there has been controversy over the term of *Ma''bar* relating

25. R.K.K. Rajarajan&JeyapriyaRajarajan, ***Minākīṣi-Sundareśvara: the Tiruvīlaiyāṭar Purāṇa*** in Letters, Design and Art, Delhi, 2013, Cjaps. I & II

26. Devakunjari, D., ***Madurai Though the Ages from Earliest Times to 1801 A.D.***, Society for Archaeological, Historical and Epigraphical Research, Madras, 1979, p.140.

to Madurai among the historians. However, it has been thought as Madurai. The King (Sundara Pandya Deva) possesses vast treasures and wears upon his person great store of rich jewels. He maintained the great state and administered his kingdom with great equity and extends great favour to merchants and foreigners so that they were very glad to visit his city Madurai.²⁷ Wassaf, a medieval Muslim historian, states that Maravarman Kulasekhara I the ruler of *Ma"bar*, enjoyed a highly prosperous life. His coffers were replete with wealth, in as much, that in the treasury of the city of Madurai there were 1200 corers of gold deposited, every crore, being equal to a thousand lakhs and every lakh to one hundred thousand *dinars*. Besides this there was an accumulation of precious stones, such as pearls, rubies, turquoise and emeralds. More than is in power of language to express.²⁸ Since the ancient times Madurai has served as the international metro plus with overseas, commercial and cultural contacts with distant countries of the ancient world both in the east and the west.²⁹ Strabo, states that a Pandya king sent an embassy to the Roman Emperor Augustus.³⁰ The above said source information has been attested in Silapatikaram a classical Tamil work that the Roman soldiers were employed as body guards and a gate keeper of palace

27. Sathianathaier,R., ***History of India, Vol, II***, S.Viswanathan, PVT., LTD, Chennai, 1998, p.82.

28. Devakunjari, Op. cit., p.141.

29. Ibid., p.2.

30. Francis, W., ***Madura Gazetteer***, Cosmo Publications, New Delhi, 2000, p.26.

of the Pandyas.³¹ Pliny mentions about the term Pandya, which refers the King Pandian and western coast his Mediterranean emporium of Madura.³² He said Pandaes (Pandyas) who alone of the Indians were in the habit of having female sovereigns. There was separate settlement of Romans in Madurai for Mint of coins for the commercial activities.³³ This fact is unknown to a lot of Indians but Madurai is quite famous for the production of jasmine flowers which are also known as Madurai Malli. These flowers have been growing in the city for hundreds of years and have been mentioned in the ancient texts of Tamil literature. We can see the cultivation of these flowers in areas like Aruppukkottai, Melur, Natham, Perungudi, and Nilakottai. The jasmines from Madurai are exported to countries all across the world like Germany, America, and Italy among others.³⁴ Due to the topography of the region, alkaloids like 'jamone' and 'alpha-terpineol' accumulate in the flowers, resulting in the heady fragrance. Moist, well-drained, sandy loam soil in Madurai is ideal for jasmine cultivation. These flowers are used for making expensive perfumes, soaps, oils, and shampoos. The annual demand is estimated to be 10,500 tonnes while

31. Devakunjari, D., Op.cit., p.69.

32. Bishop, R., Caldwell, **A History of Tinnevely**, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 2004, p.16.

33. Pillai, K.K., **TamilakaVaralaruMakkalumPanaptum** (T) International Institute of Tamil Studies, Chennai, 0208, p.56.

34. A.K. Singh (2006). **Flower Crops: Cultivation and Management**. New India Publishing. pp. 193–205.

the district produces only 9,500 tonnes.³⁵ Madurai has been inhabited since at least the 3rd century BCE. Megasthenes may have visited Madurai during the 3rd century BCE, with the city referred as "Methora" in his accounts.³⁶ Madurai is known as 'the sleepless city of India' as more than 30% of people here are sleep deprived. This is since there are always some activities that are going on all day and night. It is also known as "ThoongaNagaram" which translates to 'The Ever awakened City'.³⁷ According to Iraiyanar's Ahapporul which contains the earliest account of the three Sangams, the first Tamil Sangam in Tenmadurai was founded by saintly scholars and pious kings. Tradition says Kunpandya died without legitimate children and all the illegitimate children naturally fought for supremacy and they all reigned in various parts of the kingdom with different capitals.³⁸ The first Sangam existed at Thenmadurai for 4440 years. Presided over by Lord Siva, it had gods and sages as members. As the location of Thenmadurai could not be proved, it is believed that Thenmadurai could have submerged in the sea.³⁹ The second Sangam existed at Kapaadapuram, a nearly capital of the Pandya's, for 3700 years. It was left under the control of sages, with Agastya as president. Yet they could find no

35. Madurai jasmine set to become global brand in 2012. Owing to its distinct petal colour and fragrance, the variety was granted the Geographical Indication tag on 11th January 2013, making it the first flower of South India to receive the tag. Jasmine is a genus of shrubs and vines in the olive family (Oleaceae). It contains around 200 species native to tropical and warm temperate regions of Eurasia, Africa, and Oceania. Jasmines are widely cultivated for the characteristic fragrance of their flowers

36. Zvelebil, Kamil ***Companion studies to the history of Tamil literature***. 1992. p. 27.

37. The Hindu an English daily dated 3rd September 2013. Madurai.

38. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, ***The Pandyan Kingdom***, London, 1929. p. 13.

39. *ibid* p.23

Sangam. Thereupon, it was pointed out, with the common elite in control of this academy. The third Sangam period lasted during the first three centuries of the Christian era. It was followed by the age of darkness which lasted for about three centuries that is from A.D.300 to A.D. 600. The Kalabhras were finally uprooted by Kadungon Pandya who inaugurated the first Pandyan Empire around about A.D. 570.⁴⁰ The ancient history of Madurai is bound up with the history of the Pandyas. It is not known with any certainty when the Pandyas began their rule. According to one version, they were ruling in Madurai Country even in the age of the Ramayana, that a verse in the epic in the KishkindhaKanda must be taken to refer to the Kapatapuram of the Pandyas mentioned in the Tamil legend of the Three Sangams. Another version states that the Pandya Kingdom was at least as ancient as the Mahabharatha. But there is ample evidence to show that about the beginning of the Christian era of the Pandyan Kingdom of Madurai was a settled fact co-existing with those of the Cholas and the Cheras.'The classical writers of Greece and Rome were acquainted with Pandyan Kingdom. Many Roman Coins of their period have also been found in and around Madurai. In the early centuries of the Christian era, there were commercial and diplomatic relations between the Pandyan Kingdom and the Roman Empire.⁴¹ In the third century around 302 B.C. Megasthenese speaks of a country called Pandya.

40. P.I.Srinivasalyengar, ***History of the Tamils from the earliest times to 600 A.D.***, Madras, 1991,pp143-167.

41. Venkatraman.R, ***Indian Archaeology (a Survey)***, Ennes Publications, Udumalpet, 1999, p.22.

Strabo refers an embassy presumably sent by the Pandyan King to Emperor Augustus. Pliny mentions about the people of the Pandya region, King Pandian and his Mediterranean in justice, Ptolemy refers to 'Maduora' the kingdom of the Pandyan, Kautilaya also mentions about the Pandiyas. But the first source that mention all the three together are the edicts of Ashoka. Parimelalagar,⁴²the renowned commentator on the Kural, mentions that Chera, Chola and the Pandya's have been ruling over the Tamil country ever since the day of creation. IlangoAdigal,⁴³the brother of the Chera King Senguttuvan wrote the epic poem Silappadikaram, also known as KovalanKathai. IlangoAdigal made it more realistic and lively by blending legend with history.⁴⁴ The work is of great historical value as reflecting upon the social and political conditions of the country under the Pandyas. However, Sangam classics, comprising the literary works of the early Tamil contain extraordinarily abundant data of historical value. They throw some light on the political, and still more on the social and religious conditions of the early Tamil. This was the greatest period of the ancient history of Madurai and its secular prosperity is final

42. Parimelalhagar was born to Vanduvarai Perumal in Kancheepuram in the erstwhile Tondai state in a Vaishnavite Brahmin family and is believed to have lived during the late 13th century CE. He belonged to the lineage of priests of Sri Ulagalandha Perumal temple in his home town. He is also known by various names as VanduvaraiPerumal, Parimelalhagiyaar, Parimelalhagiyar, and Parimelalhagaraiyan. SivagyanaMunivar mentions him as Parimelalhagiyaar in his work.

43. IlangoAdigal was a Tamil poet and a Jain monk of the 2nd century AD/CE, who was instrumental in the creation of Silappathikaram, one of the five great epics of Tamil literature. His name is a pseudonym meaning 'Venerable Prince'. As per literary conventions at that time, he was not allowed to disclose his real name.

44. K.A.Nilakanta Sastri, **Foreign Notices of South India**, Madras, Reprint, 1995.p.58.

Portrayed in the old Tamil Classics of Manimegalai⁴⁵ and Silappathikaram.⁴⁶ The district is named after the Chief town. The word is spelt Mathurai in Tamil. Yule and Burnell say that it is generally supposed to be in Tamil form of the name Mathura, the very ancient and holy city on the Jumna, 30 miles above Agra." The Madurai Sthalapuranas state that etymology is from the Tamil Mathurai meaning anything sweet, the story being that, Siva was so pleased with the buildings erected around his shrine by the first Pandyan King as a mark of special favour, he sprinkled the temple towers, palaces and houses of the town with drops of sweet nectar shaken from his locks called mathuram. The name Madurai seems to have been a favourite one in early ages for there are several places so called in Ceylon and Malaya. There is a place called Matara in the extreme south of Ceylon, another in Burma, an island called Madura near Java. The term Madurai seems to have

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45. Manimekalai is a Tamil-Buddhist epic written by KulavanikanSeethalaiSatanar in the 6th century. It is a "anti-love narrative," a sequel to the "love story" in the first Tamil epic Silappadikaram, including some of its protagonists and their descendants. The epic has 4,861 lines in akavalmetre, divided into 30 cantos. Manimekalai is also the name of Kovalan and Madhavi's daughter, who follows in her mother's footsteps as a dancer and Buddhist nun - A Madhaviah, **Manimekalai**, international institute of tamil studies, Chennai, 2000
46. Silappatikaram is the earliest Tamil epic. It is a poem of 5,730 lines in almost entirely akaval (aciriyam) meter. The epic is a tragic love story of an ordinary couple, Kannaki and her husband Kovalan. The Silappathikaram has more ancient roots in the Tamil bardic tradition, as Kannaki and other characters of the story are mentioned or alluded to in the Sangam literature such as in the Naṛṇai and later texts such as the KovalamKatai. It is attributed to a prince-turned-monk IḷaṅkōAṭṭikal, and was probably composed in the 5th or 6th century CE

had some special significance and meaning which made it very popular in ancient times but which has been forgotten at present. In the Pandyan Kingdom there seems to have been a number of cities with name Madurai like Tenmadurai, Vadamathuri, and Nedumadurai. In the early Tamil works, the city of Madurai is known as Kudal. Kudal is a term which refers to the confluence of rivers. A town in the neighbouring Sivagangai district is called Manamadurai. The different names by which the city has been referred to historically are listed in the 7th-century poem *thiruvilayaadalpuraanam*⁴⁷ written by Paranjothi Munivar. The Madurai city, its environs and the Madura country are rich in materials that belong to the prehistoric period, though much archaeological exploration and excavation have yet to be done in this region. Robert Bruce Foote,⁴⁸ a British archaeologist was popularly called as

47. TiruvilayadalPurana is viewed to be one of the 18 Thalapuranas. It is also revered as one of the Mahapuranas (Periyapurana – the right eye of God Shiva, TiruvilayadalPurana – the left eye and Kanda Purana – the third eye). It was authored by Saint Paranjothi, estimated 300 years ago. It narrates the 64 Tiruvilayadals (Leelas in Sanskrit), loosely translated as the "playful miracles of God (Shiva) himself". It describes the legends and prevalent in the Pandyan Kingdom in South India and covers a period of more than 500 years during the reign of fifty-two Pandya kings and six other kings.

48. Robert Bruce Foote was a British geologist and archaeologist who conducted geological surveys of prehistoric locations in India for the Geological Survey of India. In 1863, he discovered the first conclusive Paleolithic stone tool a hand axe in Pallavaram, near Madras. In 1884 he discovered the 3.5 kilometres long Belum Caves, the second largest cave in the Indian subcontinent. Foote spent 33 years working for the geological survey. He is often considered the "Father of Indian Prehistory". As a geologist, one of his Significant contribution to Indian Geology is his memoir (Vol. XII) published by Geological Survey of India in 1876, titled "Geological Features of the South Mahratta Country and Adjacent Districts" where is considered a valuable treasure.

Jesse Russell, Ronald Cohn ,**Robert Bruce Foote**, england

Father of Indian prehistory who collected the palaeolithic remains in the river bank of Vaigai and also a single palaeolithic remains in Aviyur 12 miles south of Madurai. Further he found the middle and later stone remains at Thirumangalam, Sivarakottai, Tidiyan, and T. Kallupatti.⁴⁹ The Neolithic remains were found at Vallankulam south of Madurai, Thuvariman and Kovalan-pottal, Dadapatti and Karunkalakudi.⁵⁰ The Mesolithic monuments were found almost all the places of Madurai region. In 1887 Alexander Rea of the Archaeological Department had unearthed Burial –Urn at Anupanadi, DadampattiParavai and Tovariman.⁵¹ These artifacts of Prehistoric, Neolithic and Mesolithic prove the existence of human beings in Madurai since ancient times. The epigraphical evidences prove the antiquities of Madurai. In Madurai district caverns with Brahmi inscriptions have been found at more than a dozen places. Such type of inscription; have been mostly discovered in Madurai district when comparing other districts of Southern India. In particular, within the radius of about twelve kilometers of Madurai, Muthupatti, Tirupparankundram and Anaimalai seem to be more significant in connection with the historical tourism as well as epigraphical potentiality. The caverns with the old Brahmmi inscriptions have a special significance since they are

49. K.Rajan, V.P.Yatheeskumar, S.Selvakumar, ***Catalogue of Archaeological Sites in Tamil Nadu vol.1***.Heritage of India Trust,Thanjavur, 2009, p.45

50. Sridhar .***T.S,MaduraiMavattaTholiyalKaiyedu*** (Tamil)The Archaeological Hand Book of Madurai District,Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology, Chennai, 2005,p. 245

51. Devakunjari.D, Op.cit., p.10

the earliest lithic monuments of the Tamil country. The epigraphical evidences substantiate that the stone beds seems to be as old as the Brahmi inscriptions. The inscriptions were palaeographically assigned between 3rd and 2nd B.C. respectively. The Brahmi inscriptions are thrown lights on topographical, social, cultural, and commercial activities of Madurai, during the ancient period. Besides these, the Brahmi inscriptions at Siddharmalai Hill, which is situated near the village of Mettupatti, Alagarmalai and Pulankurichi has also provided information exactly about the word Madurai which has been attested in these inscriptions.⁵² The ancient Madurai was built at the confluences of the Vaigai and one of the tributaries which might have changed its course during the lapse of centuries. As a feudatory power under the Cholas, the Pandyas retained their influence in limited areas of the far south. Maravarman Sundarapandya one of their chiefs won victory over the cholas. Yet due to Hoysala interventions he failed to gain any advantage. The ascendancy of the Pandyas once again could be seen in the time of Jatavarman Sundrapandya-I.⁵³ By mid-thirteenth century under the chief, Jatavarman SundaraPandya, defeated Rajendra Chola-III expelled cholas from Madurai and founded the second Pandyan Empire. The most famous Pandyan Monarch of all times who ruled at Madurai during this period was Jatavarman. Crown prince Maravarman 1268-1310 A.D. succeeded his

52. Nilakanta Sastri, K.A., ***A History of South India (From Pre-historic times to the fall of Vijayanagar)***, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2008, pp.22-23.

53. K. Rajayyan, ***Tamil Nadu A Real History***, Madurai, 2005, p.46

Father Jatavarman as the ruler of the Pandya kingdom. CheraMahadevi Inscription on his twentieth regional year tells of his victories over Malainadu, Chola mandalam, Kongudesam, Thondinadu and Lanka. The foreign travelers who visited the Pandyan Empire during the reign of Maravarman have given an account of the Pandya country. Ships from Hormas, Kis, Aden and all Arab countries visited it. The glory of the second Pandyan empire reached its Zenith under Maravarman but the fall came in a rapid succession of events. The death of the ruler was followed by a civil war between his sons, SundaraPandya and Virapandy, the crown prince but Sundarapandya captured the throne in 1310. There upon Virapandya won the alliance of the ruler of Venad and recaptured the throne. Disappointed at the turn of events, SundaraPandya sought the aid of the Afghans, who were engaged in a war against the Hoysalas. In 1313 Ravi VarmaKulasekara of Venad occupied Madurai and subsequently Malik Kafur led his Afghan army to the Pandyan country. There were many prominent monarchs ruling Madurai till the Muslim invasions of Madurai under MalikKafur in the 14th Century. Thereafter Madurai was reduced to a province of the AfghanSultanate.⁵⁴ Yet the Pandyas did not altogether vanish from the scene of history. They held possession of remote areas and the inscriptions that are found in the district of Madurai, Ramnad and Pudukkottai indicate the survival of their influence

54. N.Venkataramanayya, *Early Muslim Expansion in South India*, Madras, 1942, p.58.

in these areas till the end of the 14th century. The last rulers rebuilt the temples at Tiruppathur near Madurai. The pandyas of Tirunelveli had their existence up to the 17th century. Madurai formed the southernmost province of the Delhi Sultanate. It was situated so remote from Delhi that the Afghan sultans found it impossible to exercise their authority from their capital. Added to this, the Delhi Sultanate was in a state of disorder. The Muslim Sultanate of Madurai lasted from 1334 A.D. to 1378 A.D. a period of about forty-four years. These years were marked by constant persecution of the Hindus. The Hindus were often slaughtered, their temples were invariably pillaged and desecrated and their idols were continually deprived of worship. Meanwhile the newly established Hindu Kingdom of Vijayanagar tried to deal with the Muslim Sultanate of Madurai.⁵⁵ Kumara Kampana, son of Bukka, the Co-founder of Vijayanagar Kingdom, attacked the Muslims at Madurai about 1370 A.D. and defeated them. Kampana's expedition just weakened the Muslim power in Madurai but it had not ended the Muslim rule, which continued till 1378 A.D. Probably during this period of the Madurai Sultanate the Pandyas confined their activities to the extreme south leaving Madurai in the hands of Muslims.⁵⁶ The Madura Vijayam of Ganga Devi tells of the atrocities committed by the Sultans of Madurai and gives legitimacy for Kampana's expedition to the far south. According to tradition given in this work a mysterious lady appeared before

55. S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, ***South India and her Muhammadan Invaders***, Madras, 1921, pp 168-170.

56. Sathyanatha Ayyar, ***History of the Nayakas of Madura***, Madurai 1922 p.5

him, narrated the wicked deeds of the Muslim and produced a mighty sword, the symbol of Pandyan sovereignty. Accordingly in 1370A.D Kampana marched from senji on his southern expedition. In the battles at Samayavaram and KannanurKuppam the invading army defeated the Muslim forces near Madurai in 1371, the Muslims again suffered a defeat and the Sultan died fighting. The last Sultan was Sikander Shah. Emperor Harihara-II1376A.D-1404A.D of Vijayanagar defeated andkilled the Sultan and completed the conquest of Madurai Country by 1378.A.D. The viceroyalty of Kumara Kampana might be regarded as the brightest chapter in the history of Vijayanagar rule in Tamil territory. Kampana is thus represented to have restored Hindu sovereignty in the Madurai Kingdom as a lawful successor of the Pandyan kings.⁵⁷The Madurai TalaVaralaru makes it clear that from the year 1371 A.D. Kampana, his son Empana and his nephew Prakasa Wodayar ruled over Madurai for a period of thirty three years."The period between 1559 A.D and 1781A.D which can be called the Medieva lPeriod in the history of Madurai. It is the most important period, since the city become under the rule of Nayaks. Tradition describes the foundation of the Nayak Kingdom of Madurai to KrishnadevaRaya. It is believed that Emperor Krishna Deva Raya in the last year organized the Nayakship of Madurai beginning with VishwanathaNayak1529A.D- 1564A.D.⁵⁸ Madurai experienced the rule of numerous Nayaks. Vishwanatha Nayak,

57. Krishnaswami Aiyangar,S.B.M. Pande,***Vijayanagara-History and Legacy***, New Delhi, 1921.Reprint 2000, p.177.

58. J.T.L Nelson,***Madura country A manual, part 3, The Political History Of The Madura Country***,Madras,1989.p.87.

showed outstanding abilities both as a warrior and statesman. Soon after he came to Madurai, he reconstructed the fort with 72 bastions. It was only Viswanath for the purpose of administration divided his territories into 72 palayams and placed them in charge of a local chieftain called a Palayakar or Poligar. The paliyakars were to maintain troops for the defense of the territories, to run civil administration of the country and to pay one-third of the land revenue collection as tribute.⁵⁹ The most prominent Nayak of Madurai was ThirumalaNayak(1625-1659). He came to power at critical time in the history. He constructed fortress on the frontiers, he raised an army of 30,000 men and shifted his capital fromTiruchirappallibacktoMadurai.⁶⁰ Taking advantage of the decline of the Vijayanagar empire, Tirumala threw off the nominal allegiance to Vijayanagar but had to face the Sultan of Bijapur who compelled Tirumala to pay him tribute. After the death of Tirumala, the kingdom of Madurai fell into pieces. Among his successors, the ruler of importance was RaniMangammal(1689-1706). During her reign of fifteen years, she acted as a Queen- Regent for her minor grandson. The Madurai region enjoyed peace and prosperity during her rule. After Rani Mangammal Madurai began to decline in importance and the country became an easy prey to each successive band of invaders, the Marathas and the Mughals. Finally the Mughals established their rule in Madurai in1736.⁶¹ The Mughal rule ultimately changed into that of the

59. K.Rajayyan,, ***History of Madurai, 1736-1801***, Madurai 1974, P.18.

60. Krishnaswami.A.Pillai,,***The Tamil country under Vijayanagar***,Annamalai nagar,1964.p157.

61. R.AlaIaSundaram ,***The Colonial World of AnandaRanga pillai,1736-1761***, Pondicherry, p.67.

Nawab of Carnatic and the rule of the Nawab went on till the settlement of the Treaty of Carnatic with the English in 1801 when the territory of the Carnatic including Madurai region came under the control of the English.⁶² The Carnatic Treaty of 1801 ended the conflicting system of control and started an administration obliged to accept sole responsibility over the Madurai region. The revenue of the Carnatic was decreasing but on orderly administrative by the British increased the resources. The English began to reconstruct Madurai which was greatly, affected by the wide spread rebellion of 1801.⁶³ Madurai has survived the political vicissitudes with undiminished vigor. The city's adaptability to changing times, politics and other circumstances has enabled Madurai to retain its central position all through till the present day. Madurai is one of the few Indian cities which has maintained its connections with the past intact and its growth is still dependent on the roots firmly planted in the soil that is 2000 years old. Madurai has a good deal of culture and civilization which distinguish itself from other cities. Therefore, no other place in India where the foreigner, anxious to have an insight into the religious life and traditions of the Hindus, would be so well rewarded as by a visit to Madurai and a close study of the Meenakshi Temple. Madurai is a city of religion. Hence temples and festivals play an important role in the cultural life of the people and in this way,

62. K.A.Nilakanta Sashtri, ***Further sources of Vijayanagara History***, 1946, Madras, Reprint 2003, p.136.

63. Edward Thornton, ***The History of the British Empire in India, Vol 5*** London, 1845, Reprint 2003. p.113.

Madurai is famous for its rich cultural heritage. Its temples and festivals have been the main inspiration for the religious and cultural activities right from the ancient period. The Temple city has a continuous spiritual history. The spiritual town of Madurai has been the centre of worship for many centuries, and it is one of the places where according to the Hindus divinity is concentrated which makes the city holy. The frequency of visits of the foreign and domestic tourists in the pilgrimage centres of Tamil Nadu revealed that most preferred pilgrimage centre for the foreign tourists in Tamil Nadu is Kanyakumari followed by Kanchipuram and Madurai. In the case of domestic tourists of Tamil Nadu, the most preferred pilgrimage centre is Madurai followed by Kanyakumari.⁶⁴ Domestic tourists of Tamil Nadu also have high preference for Palani, Suchindram and Mamallapuram. An account of the religious conditions of the people will be incomplete without a reference to the village Gods and deities that is believed to protect the people of the respective villages from evil spirits and contagious diseases like small pox and cholera. They were propitiated to save the folk from such calamities. As Whitehead writes that sole object of the worship of these village deities is to propitiate them and avert their wrath. There is no idea of praise and thanks giving, no expression of gratitude or love, no desire for any spiritual or moral blessings. The one object is to get rid of cholera, small pox. The worship therefore, in most of the village takes place occasionally.⁶⁵ The worship of

64. Bhatia, A.K., ***Tourism Development Principles and Practices***, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1995, p.95.

65. D.D. Henry Whitehead, ***The Village Gods of South India***, London, 1916, p.123.

Village gods is the most ancient form of India religion. In almost every village of south India one can see a shrine of grama devata who is periodically worshipped. The normal function of the grama devata is the guardianship of the village. It is probable that a large proportion of these gods have been revered for centuries, but many are of quite recent origin.⁶⁶The village deities of Madurai do not belong to the Agamic pantheon of Hinduism which are found in almost all villages throughout Madurai district. They are known as kavaldevam or guardian spirits in Tamil. They are associated to a main deity who is generally described as kuladeivam by various sects of community and clan groups as part of tracing their roots and they are always found in the outskirts of the village.⁶⁷These temples are usually in the open space and will not have traditional gopurams. These deities are represented in the form of a huge, fierce statue, on a simple stone, weapons such as trident or a lance or sickles are also associated with these shrines. It is the belief of the village people that the karuppusamy god is being disguised in the form of the man who predicts the future. This belief system about karuppusamy is called the "Arul Vaaku" in several part of Tamilnadu. The social issues will be discussed through the temple fore-tellers (Kodangi) whom the people usually consider as the voice of the karuppu. When lord karupu addresses the people in different villages through kodangi, different issues and dimensions on social, cultural and psychological aspects of people and society are reviewed for possible solutions.

66. J.Abbe Dubois, ***Hindu, Manners of Customs and Ceremonies***,2007,p.178.

67. ibid p.186.

Ayyanar is worshipped as protective deities around Madurai. Ayyanar shrines are usually located at the peripheries or boundaries of rural villages, and the deity is seen with a sword riding a white horse. He and fierce-looking karuppusami, his most important companion with a moustache, a large sickle and a scary demon by his side, are eternally vigilant fighting against demons and evil spirits that are threatening the village. It is believed that the Ayyanar cult⁶⁸ goes back to an ancient clan-based Dravidian cult of ancestor worship that is linked to nature and fertility worship. Blood sacrifices at these shrines are very common. The huge and terrifying images are accompanied by larger than life of attendants and animals. Most officiating priests are non-brahmins. They derive from local lineage that had initiated the cult many generations ago. Some of the important village deities of Madurai are Kochadai Muthaiah, Muneeswarar, Samana Malai Ayyanar, Karuppanachami of Nagamalai, Velappa of Mavuthu, is a village near Theppampatti near Aandipatti, Melmalai Karuppu, Natham near Dindugal. Thottichi Amman of Periya Poolankulam, Chenpaka Moorthi Ayyanar of Iyamkottai near Dindugal. Pandi Muneeswarar of Melamadai near Mattu Thavani of Madurai town, Maya

68. Ayyanar is often referred to as a 'viran' or a brave one who rides horses, brandishes a trident and fights demons and protects the villagers security in the rural parts of southern India. Ayyanar may be seated between his two wives, carrying a scepter or whip and wearing a meditation band (a cloth girdle circling round the back and supporting the knees of a seated person). Ayyanar protects the cattle and harvest; he incites the monsoons, and drives away evil spirits. Ayyanar aka Muneeswaran statue located at Tamilnadu, Karur. It is worshipped as a God.
The Frontline, 10 April 2020,

Kuruvi of Mukkudi in between Sivaganga and Madurai, AachiKizhavi of Usilampatti. In cities the street names have outlived landmarks more than 2000 years which People and time discover. “ChithirakkaraTheru” (Painters’ Street) has one such incident to narrate that Raja Ravi Verma learned the nuances of traditional Indian water colour portrait painting from RamaswamyNaiker, a known painter of that time in the city.⁶⁹ Tucked between East Marret and East Masi Street, the chithirakkara street was once the home of portrait painters and those specializing in temple art. Painters of Madurai were well known for their expertise, today, the long, narrow stretch is filled with whole sale jiggery merchants and there’s nothing left of its glory”. “Around 300 painter families flourished under the patronage of naicker rule”.Madurai is a maze of centuries old lanes and by lanes. But even longtime residents of their lanes were not able to decipher the origin of the street names. They offer only stories, myths, speculations and suggestions. It is believed that once during the king’s rule, when Madurai was filled with kadambatrees, this part of the town was full of karivepillaitrees’. But now there is not a single karivepillai tree in the lane today.⁷⁰ Madurai is one of the many temple towns in the state which is named after the groves, clusters or forests dominated by a particular variety of a tree or shrub and the same variety of tree or shrub sheltering the presiding deity. Madurai is derived from the name Madhurapuri,

69. D.Devaraj, ***A study on street names of Madurai city***, The Hindu,an English daily dated10th November 2011,Madurai.

70. The Hindu an English daily dated 17 November 2011.Madurai.

standing for the nectar that was showered upon the city as blessings from Lord Shiva's locks. Madurai is situated in the Vaigai Valley, in the southern Tamil region. Madurai is known as the Athens of East due to two features mentioned as follows. Madurai is known for literature, music and drama. 'Maduraikkanchi,'⁷¹ one of the longest poems in the collection of Ten Idles, contains a graphical pen picture covering 370 lines on Madurai city in the early centuries of the Christian era. According to it, Madurai was a large and beautiful city with a palace, a number of temples, two large-crowded bazaars and many well-laid streets, with lofty mansions. The Vaigai river skirted the city walls and formed a natural defiance on one side. The houses on either side were well-planned. The reminiscence of the old streets is still in vogue. Of all the other factors, it is true that Madurai is always busy both in the daytime and at night from the very ancient period. People used to say that Madurai never sleeps.⁷² It is the cultural capital of Tamil Nadu and the administrative headquarters of Madurai District, the third largest city in Tamil Nadu and 44th most populated city in India. Located on the banks of River Vaigai, Madurai has been a major settlement for two millennia. The city is believed to be of significant antiquity and has been ruled, at different times, by the Pandyas

71. Maduraikanchi is an ancient Tamil poem in the Sangam literature. It is a didactic poem and its title connotes the "poetic counsel addressed to the king of Madurai. Composed by MankutiMarutanar – probably the chief court poet of the Pandya king Nedunjeliyan II, the Maduraikkāñci is the sixth poem in the Pattuppāṭṭu anthology. The poem is generally dated to the late classical period 2nd to 4th century CE.

72. **Wake-up call for Madurai's sleepless**". The Hindu an English daily dated Madurai. 3rd September 2013.

,Cholas, Madurai Sultanate, Vijayanagar Empire, Madurai Nayaks, Carnatic kingdom, and the British East India Company British Raj.⁷³ The city has a number of historical monuments, with the Meenakshi Amman Temple and the Tirumalai Nayak Palace being the most prominent. The city of Madurai has already been recounted in Sangam literature, as illustrated by Silapathikaram.⁷⁴Madurai is closely associated with the Tamil language, and the third Tamil Sangam, a major congregation of Tamil scholars said to have been held in the city. The recorded history of the city goes back to the 3rd century BCE, being mentioned by Megasthenes may have visited Madurai during the 3rd century BCE, with the city referred as "Methora" in his accounts. The view is contested by some scholars who believe "Methora" refers to the north Indian city of Mathura, as it was a large and established city in the Mauryan Empire.⁷⁵Kautilya, a minister of the Mauryan emperor Chandragupta Maurya. Signs of human settlements and Roman trade links dating back to 300 BC are evident from excavations by Archeological Survey of India in Manalur. According to IravathamMahadevan, a 2nd-century BCE Tamil-Brahmi inscription refers to the city as matiray , an Old Tamil word meaning a "walled city".⁷⁶ According to legend, it was the home of a poets' academy

73. Tamil Nādu – City Population – Cities, Towns & Provinces – Statistics & Map". Thomas Brinkhoff. 2011.

74. *ibid.*, p.45

75. Narasaiah (2009). ***Aalavai – Madurai ManagarathinKadhai***. Palaniyappa Brothers. p. 85.

76. Mahadevan, Iravatham. ***Early Tamil Epigraphy from the Earliest Times to the Sixth Century A.D.*** Harvard University Press. (3 October 2003)

And remained an important cultural and religious centre in the Tamil region. There are three legends in the Sacred Games which show how this city has a miraculous beginning. The first legend says Indra, the king, committed a great sin by killing a demon. Brihaspati, the preceptor of gods, advised him to find his purification in the world of humans. After a long wandering, Indra found a sense of “purification” in a forest of Kadamba trees. On close examination, he discovered that a miraculous Linga and a ‘golden lily pond’ beside it were the sources of his purification. He bathed in the pond, worshipped the Linga and pledged to return to this spot every year at full moontime in the month of Chithirai (April-May) for thanks-giving.⁷⁷ According to the second legend, Airavata, a white elephant, the vehicle of Indra, once disregarded a sage's gift. The sage, Durvasa, cursed the celestial elephant to be born on earth as a wild elephant and wander for ages. This Airavata, while wandering, happened to come to the same Kadamba forest and bathed in the golden lily pond. Immediately, it regained its celestial beauty. Siva appeared out of the Linga and asked Airavata to return to its celestial master.⁷⁸ Thus, even before the town of Madurai became a human habitation, the spot had a claim to sanctity. Its purifying power was there since time immemorial, even before human beings discovered that power. The third legend mentions that long ago there was a Pandya king called Kulasekara, who had Manalur as his capital. One day

77. Breckenridge-Appadurai C., ***The Sri MinaksiSundaresvarar Temple: Worship and Endowments in South India***, PHD Thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1976.

78. Palaniappan, K., ***The Great Temple of Madurai***, Madurai, 1970.P.98

, a merchant told the king of a marvelous Linga in a nearby Kadamba forest. That same night, Siva appeared to the king in a dream and advised him to clear the forest and build a town there.⁷⁹ Thus, Madurai was founded and the royal capital was shifted to it. Not only the founding of the city has sacred connection, but also many features in and around this city have a sacred origin, according to the texts.⁸⁰ The river Vaigai was created by Siva from the Ganges flowing in his hair. Besides the Vaigai, the three important hills around Madurai — the Anaimalai (elephant hill), Pasumalai (cow hill) and the Nagamalai (snake hill) — were also created by Lord Siva under strange.⁸¹ The Nayaks period, which lasted from the 16th to the 18th centuries, had already defined the urban area at the start of the colonial era. According to the maps drawn by Europeans in the 18th century, the great Minakshi temple formed the heart of the city.⁸² It is built around the Meenakshi Amman Temple, which acted as the geographic and ritual centre of the ancient city of Madurai. The city is divided into a number of concentric quadrangular streets around the temple. Vishwanatha Nayak (1529–64 CE), the first Madurai Nayak king, redesigned the city in accordance with the principles laid out

79. Nelson J.H., ***The Madura Country A Manual, part 3***; The Political History of the Madura Country, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1983, pp.3-4

80. Ibid., P.10

81. Srinivasan, K.R., ***Temples of South India***, New Delhi, 1993, pp.184-185.

82. Valayapettai, Ra. Krishnan, ***The Great Temple of Madurai Meenakshi Arulmigu Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple***, Madurai, 2014, p.45.

By ShilpaShastras⁸³ also anglicised as silpasastra meaning rules of architecture, related to urban planning. The quadrangular plan contained three circular streets namely, Chittirai Street, Avani Moollay Street and Masi Street. The first and largest, Chittirai Street, ran along the four walls of the temple, and the last, Masi or 'Car Street,' was used by the immense chariots carrying the divine couple during the great annual celebration in honour of the marriage of Siva and Minakshi.⁸⁴ The complex constituting the palace constructed by TirumalaNayaka in the 17th century occupied a considerable amount of space in the southeast. The entirety of the city was protected by a fortress, punctuated by four doors and surrounded by a moat running 5,670 yards built to replace the wall that had been erected during the second Pandya dynasty in 11th to 13th centuries.⁸⁵ By the end of the 18th century, the city centre had become densely populated while the portions of the city located Beyond Masi Street were not entirely developed, possibly a consequence of a decrease in population following the Karnatak Wars in the 18th century. This

83. Shilpa refers to any art or craft in ancient Indian texts, while Shastra means science.

Together, ShilpaShastra means the science of art and crafts. It is an ancient umbrella term for numerous Hindu texts that describe arts, crafts, and their design rules. In the context of Hindu temple architecture and sculpture, ShilpaShastras were manuals for sculpture and Hindu iconography, prescribing proportions of a sculptured figure, composition, principles, meaning, and rules of architecture. ShilpaShastras deal with creating statues, icons, stone murals, painting, carpentry, pottery, jewellery, dying, textiles and others.

84. Sivanandham, M., ***Feudalism in Madurai 1565-1801***, unpublished Ph.D thesis, M.K. University, Madurai, 1998, p. 184.

85. Oriental and India Office Collections of the British Library (OIOC), Official Publications, V/27/66/138, 'Report on the Medical Topography and Statistics of the Southern Division of the Madras Army', 1843.

great fortified city Madurai was quite different from the open temple cities of the region, such as Kanchipuram or Chidambaram: its political functions were as visible as its sacred element.⁸⁶ The homes of city-dwellers were hardly distinguishable from their rural counterparts. Most were single-story buildings with earthen walls and thatched roofs using palm leaves, surrounded by vegetation. The fortress built by the Nayaks had included cultivated land and crops, particularly orchards, and it continued to occupy an important place in the heart of the city in 1837. The palace itself contained several buildings and large gardens surrounded by a large wall. Madurai was an administrative capital, a religious centre, a market and above all an artisanal hub. Weavers, often very poor lived in wretched conditions, constituted the principal group. Its population of roughly 30,000 grew slightly during the first third of the 19th century. Nevertheless, the city did not experience any significant economic upheaval that could have justified the redevelopment in 1837.⁸⁷ The city's population doubled during the large annual festival that

86. Lewandowski described it as a 'ceremonial city' in 'Changing Form and Function', pp. 185–96.

87. Oriental and India Office Collections of the British Library (OIOC), Official Publications, V/27/66/138, 'Report on the Medical Topography and Statistics of the Southern Division of the Madras Army', 1843.

accompanied a large jallikattu or cattle fair.⁸⁸ The great temple in Madurai attracted thousands of pilgrims throughout the year, but that was nothing out of the ordinary within the Tamil cultural context. The traditional means of accommodation were used without the colonial administration judging their involvement to be necessary. After the disappearance of the Nayaks kingdom of Madurai it was conquered by the Nawab of Arcot in 1736, and the city had gone through a difficult period. The English, the French and their Indian allies contested and found itself under siege. Following the annexation of the Karnataka by the East India Company in 1801, Madurai became a simple administrative centre for the district.⁸⁹ The buildings inherited from the preceding periods quickly fell into decay. The palace of the Nayaks, already abandoned in 1800, was in ruins by 1837 and 5,000 dwellings were contained within its walls. Throughout the city, encroachments had rendered the wide streets increasingly narrow, a common occurrence in Tamil cities.⁹⁰ The Forty-foot-tall rampart surrounding the city was threatening to collapse. The taxes

88. The traditional bull-taming game practised in Tamil Nadu is popularly known as Jallikattu. It is a popular tradition during the Pongal celebrations. Jallikattu is celebrated in the second week of January, during the Tamil harvest festival, on the day of MattuPongal, which is the third day of the 4day long Pongal events. The words 'Jallikattu' are from the Tamil words 'jalli' and 'kattu.' Gold or silver coins are referred to As Jalli. The word kattu means 'tied.' As a result, it relates to money tied to the bulls' horns, which are regarded as the prize for whoever tames the bull. The winning bull services many cows, preserving the local breed.

OIOC, V/27/840/28, Ranking, 'Madras Fairs and Festivals, 1868'.

89. Narasaiah (2009). Aalavai – ***Madurai ManagarathinKadhai***. Palaniyappa Brothers. p. 85.

90. Daniell, Oriental Scenery, Vol. II, pl. 13, 15, 17.

raised largely from land revenue in the cities, which seemed to lack any element of 'domination' over the countryside. Thus there were no urban institutions in existence that could have undertaken the duties of city management. The only additions granted in the most populated centres were a kotwal and several peons charged with policing duties. The people were never involved with urban administration. It is important to note that even the religious buildings were affected by this political abandonment of the cities. Since the Cholera, the Hindu rulers of the Madurai region legitimised their power by actively supporting religious institutions and Brahmins, financing costly construction programmes.⁹¹ During the colonial period, the maintenance of sanctuaries and sacred reservoirs relied solely on the temple's own funds and donations from wealthy devotees. The management of religious institutions, however, was under the control of the East India Company until 1841, and any expenditure unrelated to the financing of regular rites appeared pointless to the British. One can point to the planned restoration of a mandapam, found in Madurai's teppakulam to demonstrate how much the existing system left to be desired.⁹² Madurai was transformed in the 1840s through the initiative of John Blackburne, the Collector from 1834 to 1848.⁹³ Under his direction, the forty-foot high stone and brickwalls that had surrounded the city since the seventeenth century were pulled down, the

91. Gopal, Madan (1990). K.S. Gautam (ed.). ***India through the ages***. Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India

92. K.Rajayyan,, ***History of Madurai, 1736-1801***, Madurai 1974, P.18.

93. TNSA, Madura District Record (Madura DR), vol. 4683, pp. 416–17, 30th November 1835.

defensive ditch filled in and wide new streets were laid in their place. In 1835, the Collector J. Blackburne expressed the view that this mandapam was 'in a daily decaying' and in a 'very dangerous state', which raised fears of potential accidents during the annual festival. But in the late 19th it was not kings who presided over the expansion of these sacred sites but an emergent community of merchant money lenders, the Nattukkottai Chettiars or Nakarattars. Their homeland is the remote, arid region of Chettinadu in southern Tamil Nadu between Madurai and Trichy, south of Pudukkottai.⁹⁴ In the later 19th century, members of this community became wealthy through trade and especially money-lending within the expanding colonial economy of British India, including Burma and Malaya. Some of this wealth was spent on the creation of lavish houses, for which Chettinadu is famous, but they also acquired a reputation as pious Shaivas who funded and led many temple renovations across the Tamil region. One of the earliest of these renovation campaigns was at Madurai in the 1870s, when the north gopura was completed, the early 18th century Kalyanamandapa was roofed with copper, and the Kambattadi mandapa transformed with the addition of the elaborate sculpted columns around the Nandi, balipitha and dhvajastambha.⁹⁵ The renovation programme was begun in January 1872, and was led by Devakkottai Mutturamalinga Chetti and his son Kutti Ayyah. Nagappa, another

94. Francis, W., *Madura Gazetteer*, New Delhi, 2000, pp. 232-233.

95. Carol Breckenridge, *The Sri Minaksi Sundareswarar Temple: Worship and Endowments in South India, 1833 to 1925*, PhD thesis, University of Wisconsin – Madison, 1976, p. 390

Chettiar resident in Madurai. was on the temple's management committee from 1863 and was also involved.⁹⁶ The cost of the renovation and the increasingly elaborate ritual and annual festivals from this period was considerable: in 1906, Francis reported that Rs. 5,00,000 had recently been spent on the temple by Nattukkottai Chetties at a time when the temple's stated annual income was Rs. 90,000 and in the late 1860s half this amount.⁹⁷ A Nattukkottai Chetti had advanced 1,000 rupees for its repair during Rous Peter's administration who was the Collector of Madurai from 1812 to 1828. But this sum had been kept on deposit awaiting further donations and 'these money disappeared with the other embezzlements of that period'. In 1835, the 'Merchant', 'still anxious for the celebrity of his name', offered to add 3,000 rupees to cover the repairs in their entirety if the 1,000 rupees were reimbursed to him.⁹⁸ The buildings' deterioration was an inevitable process under management such as the enjoying little support, often even subject to active criticism by the provincial authorities and pressured by the discontented population's protests, the Collector John Blackburne is a somewhat typical Company servant representative of the Madras Presidency under the East India Company. On March 31, 1847, Vilakkuthoon, the lamppost arrived from England and was commissioned by Blackburne.⁹⁹ On this day, Blackburne inspected the new

96. Francis, W., *Madura Gazetteer*, New Delhi, 2000, pp. 232-233.

97. W. Francis, *Madras District Gazetteers, Vol. 6: Madura*, Government Press, Madras, 1906, p. 272;

98. TNSA, *Madura District Record (Madura DR)*, vol. 4683, pp. 416-17, 30/11/1835.

99. Lewandowski Susan J. 'Changing Form and Function in the Ceremonial and the Colonial Port City in India: An historical Analysis of Madurai and Madras', *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 2 (2), 1977, pp. 183-212. 26

streets which were added to the town and named them after foreman Perumal and surveyor Marret. Convinced that he acted for the common good, he did not take kindly to criticism. His administrative conception was contradictory: he claimed to personally control everything, implying a centralisation of the system, but he was unwilling to justify his actions and refused to become a cog in a bureaucratic system that would have required him to dutifully adhere to its hierarchy. He thus proceeded in an independent manner, not hesitating to develop illegal financial projects into which he contributed personal funds in order to accelerate the progress of work in Madurai.¹⁰⁰ Blackburne took care to foster his relations with his Indian employees, who were also his informants, in order to maintain his privileged position in the district. He conducted himself like a local prince as R. Peter had done, a Collector who had been integrated so thoroughly into the local society that he had been named 'Peter Pandya'. It was said that he had miraculously escaped death during a hunt an elephant nearly crushed him and that in gratitude he had made offerings of thanks to the goddess of Madurai. For Blackburne, however, this strong local integration did not involve associating with the inhabitants in the management of the city. Like the other magistrates in the Tamil region, sceptical of the inhabitants' ability to significantly invest themselves in local affairs, he deemed the application of 1842's Act X to be of little use in his district.¹⁰¹ The years following 1801 saw

100. Briggs, *Victorian cities*, p. 22.

101. This Act allowed for the creation of urban institutions based on voluntary participation of inhabitants. OIOC, Madras Board of Revenue Proceedings (MBRP), P/305/26, pp. 15642-50, 29/10/1844 and 18/11/1844.

few initiatives in the Tamil cities and most of them were undertaken with the aim of improving security. In 1805 ten new twelve-yard-wide roads were opened in and around Madurai, Tiruchirapalli in order to improve stronghold for the British Company.¹⁰² The Prince of Wales visited the temple in December 1875 while the renovation programme was in progress; E.J . Sewell's souvenir programme makes little mention of this, however, largely reproducing the discussion of the temple in J .H. Nelson's *The Madura Country* .¹⁰³ When Henry Cole, the newly appointed Curator of Ancient Monuments, visited in January 1881, he noted the continued repairs at this very wealthy temple.¹⁰⁴ A reconstruction of Pudukottai—capital of the like-named principality—was begun in 1812 by the Raja, under the encouragement of the British Resident. By 1837, security in the cities was considered to be well in hand and had been replaced by hygiene as the reform priority due to the frequency of epidemics. In 1810, a lack of hygiene in overpopulated was the reality of sanitation in the city in 1837. The few descriptions that we have at our disposal underline the contrast between the thriving countryside, criss-crossed by elegant roads lined by well-tended banyan trees, and a dirty city trapped within its own walls: 'The

102. MBRP, P/288/15, p. 1312, 21/02/1805 and p. 2449, 22/04/1805. Earlier, an ambitious plan to reconstruct Coimbatore was elaborated in 1800, but probably never put into use (TNSA, Coimbatore DR, Vol. 591, pp. 106–11, 24/03/1800).

103. E.J . Sewell, ***A Brief Account of Some of the Principal Buildings of Madura***, Printed by Higginbotham and Co., Madras, 18 75.

104. Henry H. Cole, ***Preservation of National Monuments***: First Report of the Curator of Ancient Monuments in India for the Year 1881- 82, Government Central Branch Press 1882, Simla, p. 16.

streets are narrow, irregular, and dirty, and the houses of the most miserable description. Large herds of cattle were often found within the precincts of the town, and mephitic miasma were exhaled from the stagnant drains in the vicinity of the fort'.¹⁰⁵ The city was undoubtedly very green. There were orchards to be found and the palace was surrounded by gardens. The main streets were lined with trees throughout the region. The land possessed a back courtyard which served as an outhouse, garden and cowshed. The primary method used to improve urban sanitary conditions was to promote better air circulation in order to allow for the dispersal of the 'miasmas' judged to be responsible for illness and to eliminate the standing water and trees considered to be carriers of disease. As a result, the most elaborate works undertaken were the destruction of the ramparts and the filling-in of the moat surrounding the city while enlarging the principal roads in the city centre and improving the drainage system. While the orchards and uncultivated areas had to be disposed of, they did not yet go so far as to drain the reservoirs, as would be the case at the beginning of the 20th century. Madurai was cited in a medical report as the principal cause of a devastating cholera epidemic in the region. Cholera continued to ravage the city nearly every year.¹⁰⁶ When the disease claimed 1,500 lives in 1836, the Collector was accused of negligence. It was this that motivated him one year later to make the decision to convert the town 'from a

105. Chandler, **Seventy-five years**, p. 2; Fullarton, *A Gazetteer of the World*.

106. TNSA, Madura DR, Vol. 4680, pp. 61-2, 03/03/1832.

dilapidated fort into an open city circulation in a city that was then considered a crucial Stronghold for the British Company.¹⁰⁷ A reconstruction of Pudukottai—capital of the like-named principality—was begun in 1812 by the Raja, under the encouragement of the British Resident. By 1837, security in the cities was considered to be well in hand and had been replaced by hygiene as the reform priority due to the frequency of epidemics. In 1810, a lack of hygiene in overpopulated Madurai was cited in a medical report as the principal cause of a devastating cholera epidemic in the region. Cholera continued to ravage the city nearly every year.¹⁰⁸ During disposal underline the contrast between the thriving countryside, criss-crossed by elegant roads lined by well-tended banyan trees, and a dirty city trapped within its own walls: ‘The streets are narrow, irregular, and dirty, and the houses of the most miserable description. Large herds of cattle were often found within the precincts of the town, and mephitic miasma were exhaled from the stagnant drains in the vicinity of the fort’.¹⁰⁹ To limit overcrowding and combat fires, the Collector attempted to limit the use of thatched roofs in the city centre. The construction of markets and the development of areas in which to park were meant to avoid the periodic invasion of the roads by vendors’ stands, animals and carts, all while ensuring a more healthy environment in which to buy and sell. The

107. OIOC, MBRP, P/305/12, p. 8012, letter dated 13/06/1844.

108. TNSA, Madura DR, Vol. 4680, pp. 61–2, 03/03/1832.

109. Chandler, *Seventy-five years*, p. 2; Fullarton, *A Gazetteer of the World*.

Collector likewise wished to clear the areas that abutted the temple and palace, considered to be the two poles of the city. One can see here a kind of intervention, typical of European cities since the Renaissance, which sought to create perspective and emphasise the urban 'architectural heritage'. The palace 'handsome and venerable vestige of the magnificence of the last Carnatic Dynasty' wrote the Collector in 1845, in ruins, was also renovated in order to serve the administration. The development of a public square, on the other hand, was never considered: this type of space particularly favoured by the French in their colonial possessions did not exist in the Tamil cities. The example of Madurai effectively demonstrates that the colonial authorities did not seek to modify the city's norms when Europeans were present in low numbers.¹¹⁰ To promote circulation and clean up the city, the urban plan was reorganised. The large pre-existing concentric main streets encircling the temple saw their role reinforced. All forms of 'encroachment' that had led to their narrowing were eliminated. The width of the Car Street was fixed at nineteen yards. Numerous secondary roads in the centre were also enlarged.¹¹¹ The original urban layout was maintained to the creation of two new roads laid on the site of the rampart and moat, parallel to Masi Street (Marrett Street and Veli Street). Along these new axes, little by little land sold or granted in exchange for expropriated properties from along the main streets was built up.

110. TNSA, Madura CR, Vol. 5340A, pp. 341–46, letter dated 31/01/1844

111. TNSA, Madura CR, Vol. 5340A, pp. 405–06, 15/07/1844

By 1844, 50 houses and shops had already been built, 114 were under construction and a further 57 foundations had been laid. In 1846 the Collector proceeded with the drafting of property titles for 1,741 buildings.¹¹² The urban expansion, however, was not limited to this zone and extended out towards the large ring that constituted Veli Street (meaning ‘outside street’). It was there near the river that the Parias, excluded from the centre, were relocated. On the municipal maps of the twentieth century, this zone is clearly situated to the north-east. Projects involved in the city planning, however, were largely limited to modifications to the road network. No public buildings were built aside from one ‘cutcherry’ established for the kotwal and 18 houses built to lodge the guards.¹¹³ Meanwhile, the renovation of old buildings was reduced to a few projects in the palace and improvement to the Civil Hospital. Following a long conflict with the owners, the Collector finally succeeded in ridding the centre of the city of a large plantation containing 182 coconut trees. By 1886, the city counted no more than a few small areca trees and other plantations here and there.¹¹⁴ Construction on ‘waste land’ was encouraged in order to avoid them from becoming dumping grounds or de facto public facilities. Some plots were allocated to persons displaced by the projects; however, this was not without contestation, as people could claim a right of occupancy in these areas as in all

112. TNSA, Madura CR, Vol. 5342, pp. 300–09, letter dated 23/04/1846

113. TNSA, Madura CR, Vol. 5340A, pp. 338–59, 20/01/1844

114. Madras Central Survey Office, map of ‘The Madura Town and Municipality’, 1886

European cities of the period, the zoning of residential and commercial areas became more functional: traffic lanes had to be cleared of all obstacles shops, pandals, housing encroachments, while residential areas were to be clearly demarcated and built consistently and without vacant spaces. It is worth noting that the emphasis placed on city traffic, new to Europeans, was not so novel in India. According to architectural treatises such as the Mayamata,¹¹⁵ streets, at once traffic and commercial areas, were to be plotted before filling in empty spaces with residential houses. The importance of religious or political processions required the maintenance of particularly large main streets. The projects thus had only to restore the city to its former functionality. On the other hand, the creation of permanent marketplaces and parking areas no doubt modified the usual routine of vendors and peasants in the city as well as the citizens' daily trajectories. Contrary to the generally accepted view, the separation of castes was far from strict in the large Tamil cities at the beginning of the 19th century outside of coastal towns. The demographic expansion, economic needs and the absence of strict regulation had led to, if not an intermingling, at least a certain acceptance of other castes and religions within different areas and even in the streets.¹¹⁶ In a city as old as Madurai, the urban plan developed by the Nayakas certainly resembled that of the rajadhani cities found in antique architectural treatises. The silk weavers were

115. Dagens, Mayamata. This text in Sanskrit, most likely dating from the thirteenth century was largely used in South India.

116. Lists of inhabitants provided during expropriations or for tax purposes prove this also for Kanchipuram and Tiruchirapalli.

regrouped around the palace and the Brahmans to the north of the Minakshi temple. But the areas surrounding the temple were inhabited by citizens of high caste and also by dancers and barbers whom the collector was determined to move from Cittirai Street.¹¹⁷ In order to make this street—the largest in the city—a model thoroughfare as much for hygiene as for aesthetics, their huts had to be torn down. Their low social stature and, in the case of the dancers, the alleged ‘immorality’ of their activity, could not be tolerated in the very centre of the city by British sensibilities characteristic of the period. As a rule, the lower castes were systematically pushed out from the city centre. Officially, it was not a policy of social segregation. For those that the Collector called the ‘Parias’, without further precision, it was rather a consequence of the reconstruction of the most overpopulated areas into which they were crowded and along the principal arteries of the city, the replacement of huts and thatched roof houses by more durable ‘substantial houses’.¹¹⁸ In any case, the necessity of moving them attests to their presence in the city centre before 1840. In 1847, the Collector mentioned a 9,837-square-foot piece of land situated in the middle of Madurai, in the ‘sacred square’ that is to say inside the square defined by the four streets of Masi occupied by the Parias and ‘abandoned’ by them in 1844 for an equal piece of land that he had given them ‘outside of the fort’. The land thus reclaimed was sold at auction and fetched 805 rupees from an Indian Brahman civil servant who intended to build shops

117. TNSA, Madura CR, Vol. 5340A, pp. 174–78, report dated 24/02/1845.

118. *ibid*

and a pettah designed to accommodate wagons and animals.¹¹⁹ As one could not prevent the poorest from seeking accommodation somewhere, they were relegated to the periphery of the city, beyond the last outlying road, Veli Street, where huts were tolerated. Other groups were openly judged ‘undesirable’ in the city, certainly due to the polluting nature of their activities: launderers, chucklers¹²⁰ and barbers had to be relocated ‘outside the city’ to land that had to be purchased for them; they were essentially relegated to an area in the northeast frequently liable to flood where they continue to live to this day. They joined artisan groups such as blacksmiths already established outside the former ramparts.¹²¹ The newly built area around the site of the former walls could not accommodate the poorest and the low castes because the quality of construction there was closely supervised. To obtain a plot, one had to commit to build a durable, tiled-roof house. Thus, the silk weavers who had obtained the first plots of land in 1842 were obliged to build their houses ‘of uniform fronts and material, with tiled roofs’. The Collector even wanted to dispose of the huts belonging to the indigenous soldiers that lined the southern portion of the rampart, arguing for the construction of proper houses, which their salaries did not permit. Above all, it must be noted that from the beginning the lands to be developed were granted according to caste and the resale of such

119. TNSA, Madura CR, Vol. 5343A, p. 250, letter dated 27/01/1847.

120. In Tamil, chakkili is a low Tamil caste, often composed of tanners and cobblers. The majority of Chakkiliyans are not tanners, but leather-workers, and, instead of getting the hides or skins direct from the Vettiyan, they prefer to purchase them ready-tanned from traders, who bring them from the large tanning centres.

121. TNSA, Madura CR, Vol. 5342, pp. 340–45, 08/08/1846).

property to those belonging to other castes was strictly forbidden. This principle of caste separation is clearly confirmed by the Collector: in a letter dating from 1845, he recalls that the land had been sold to 'particular castes or classes'. Any transfer to other classes was not allowed and indeed, he had denied one such sale in accordance with this rule.¹²² In 1844, the northwest corner of the former rampart was allocated to the 'Moodaliars and such castes'.¹²³ The Brahmans settled in the north and weavers in the eastern part of Veli Street.¹²⁴ The period of development in Madurai was a time of transition for the city and its inhabitants in more ways than one. It was in 1844 that the Company withdrew its oversight of 8,292 Hindu temples in the region. A great agitation characterised the city in 1843 because the inhabitants worried over the implications of the coinciding destruction of the city walls and the abandonment of the temples by the government. They feared that 'with the walls, their religion was about to fall'.¹²⁵ At the time, the walls surrounding the great Tamil capitals represented the physical protection of the prince toward the inhabitants of urban territories, considered during the precolonial era to be microcosms of the kingdom. The tearing down of the wall thus signified the

122. TNSA, Madura CR, Vol. 5341A, pp. 183–4, letter dated 19/03/1845

123. It is derived from the honorary title Mudali meaning a person of first rank in the Tamil language, which was bestowed upon top-ranking bureaucratic officials, philanthropists, educationists, physicians, politicians and army officers in medieval south India. Term used by the Vellalars and by the Kaikkolars of northern Tamilnadu. Chandler, *Seventy-five years*, p 15.

124. TNSA, Madura CR, Vol. 5342, pp. 300–09, 23/04/1846.

125. Chandler, *Seventy-five years*, p. 15.

definitive closure of a chapter of the city's history. The year 1845 saw another coincidence as the stationing of troops in Madurai was discontinued. Madurai had no more enemies—Indian or European—nearby and the internal threats, in particular those tied to the 'thieving' castes such as the Kallars,¹²⁶ although still present, seemed to be of little concern, especially compared to certain situations in North India. Certainly, one could suppose that the Collector would have been little inclined to inform the supervising authorities of such demonstrations, but the engineer would have nonetheless immediately seized this opportunity to attack him. The various charges presented at court, however, all stemmed from individual initiatives. As for the lack of enthusiasm, lamented by the Collector, for the purchase of land on the site of the rampart, it was not an indication of resistance to the project. Rather, it can be explained by the lack of wealthy individuals interested in a risky new financial investment. However, various forms of passive resistance can nonetheless be detected. The poor living Individuals as well as the Minakshi temple as an entity made significant contributions to the projects related to the reconstruction of the city. The temple, the direction of which was entrusted to a

126. Piramalai Kallars is a sub caste of the Kallars and thus are part of the Mukkulathor community that also includes the Maravar and Agamudayar castes. They belong to Most backward class/Denotified class in Tamil nadu. The Kallar caste has about 27 sub-castes. But for reservation purposes, we were divided into four types such as Gandarvakottai Kallar, Periya Suriyur Kallar, Koothappar Kallar and Piramalai Kallar. Kallars have different sub groups like Esanattu Kallars, Thanjavur Kallars, Koothappar Kallars, Periyasuriyur Kallars, Gandarvakoatai Kallars found largely dominated in Thanjavur, Pudukkottai &Trichy Districts

Temple Committee beginning in 1844, was the principal contributor. It financed the development of three marketplaces, on an unoccupied piece of land it owned on the large street of the bazaar, for 28,514 rupees.¹²⁷ The temples and mosques traditionally profited from commercial activities within their compounds or on lands that had been donated to them. However, the temple also invested 6,352 rupees,¹²⁸ in order to ensure the proper drainage and enlargement of the primary street circulating around the temple as well as the cleaning of two principal reservoirs in the city in 1844.¹²⁹ This effort continued after Blackburne's departure in 1848 through the financing of a drainage canal running from the temple to Veli Street, in the eastern section of the city.¹³⁰ Blackburne courted the priests of the temple to win their support. In 1846, he refused to allow governmental use of surplus funds from the temple, that he deemed necessary for worship.¹³¹ It must be noted that the colonial authorities had appropriated the surplus funds of religious institutions at the time of the decision to transfer the direction of the temples in 1841. In 1843, this represented a considerable total of 1,423,252 rupees for the Madras Presidency. The Collector also favoured the Brahmans in granting them land in the north of the city twice the size of the allocations given to the other castes,

127. OIOC, MBRP, P/301/13, p. 16082, 11/12/1837.

128. OIOC, Madras Proceedings, Public Works, P/283/21, p. 611, 18/06/1844

129. TNSA, Madura CR, Vol. 5340A, pp. 338–59, letter dated 20/01/1844.

130. TNSA, Madura DR, Vol. 5344A, p. 226, letter of the Collector to the Civil Engineer, 10/10/1848.

131. Breckenridge-Appadurai, *The Sri Minaksi Sundaesvarar Temple*, pp. 231–41. 'Idolatry (India), a Parliamentary Report of 1849', p. 496, cited by Fuller, 'The renovation ritual', pp. 40–63.

on North Veli Street,¹³² an action sharply criticised by the engineer. Several notable figures also involved themselves in the projects. G.F. Fischer, the last of the great English adventurers of the Madras Presidency, organised a fundraising effort among the inhabitants to restore the palace, giving himself the image of a disinterested benefactor.¹³³ In January 1847, he proposed to repair several buildings of the palace in order to allow the accommodation of justice court employees and plaintiffs. At the time, this entrepreneur was known as zamindar of Salem (the only English zamindar in South India) and he had significant interests in the district of Madurai since he managed the affairs of the zamindari of Ramnad, whom he had furthermore defended before Blackburne. Brahman Indian employees posted in the district were other patrons: in 1844, Ram Rao, an agent of the huzur sheristadar office erected a chattram on the banks of the Vaigai.¹³⁴ In 1847, the district's sheristadar undertook the restoration of a reservoir and garden near the Vaigai, in order to accommodate the crowd taking part in the cattle fair that accompanied the city's annual celebration,¹³⁵ a process his son continued after his death.¹³⁶

132. TNSA, Madura CR, Vol. 5342, pp. 300–09, 23/04/1846.

133. TNSA, Madura CR, Vol. 4343B, pp. 43–45, 15/01/1847.

134. The Vaigai River is the major river in Madurai that is originated in the Periyar Plateau of the Western Ghats. Situated on the Eastern slopes of the Varushanadu hills, the Vaigai River is 258 kilometres long with a drainage basin of 7,031 square kilometers. Moreover, the Vaigai basin is one among the 12 basins lying between the Cauvery and Kanyakumari. This important basin is bounded by Andipatti Hills, Palani Hills, Varushanadu Hills, Cardaman Hills and the Palk Bay on the East.
OIOC, Madras Proceedings, Public Works, P/283/22, p. 1158, 22/10/1844. .

135. OIOC, MBRP, P/307/20, p. 5358, 08/04/1847.

136. OIOC, MBRP, P/307/29, p. 9350, 12/07/1847.

These developments, taking place along the fringes of the city's reconstruction project, were clearly charitable acts in line with tradition meant to bestow local prestige. Other forms of collaboration, however, are rare. Numerous people set up market-places or parking areas in order to then rent out their access. In 1844, the Collector negotiated an agreement with the 'bricklayers of the city', who agreed to tear down the inner walls of the palace at no charge in exchange for the right to one third of the stone, an arrangement that saved nearly 4,000 rupees.¹³⁷ The motivation here was of an economic nature: this was the basis of the contracts for the raising of taxes, the supervision of markets or the collection of refuse that the municipalities established in 1866. In Madurai, the family of former qil'adars of the Nawab continued to sell land within Madurai's fort, claiming the property to have originated from the Nawab. By 1826, the Collector R. Peter, who had made use of his right to dispose of urban grounds several times,¹³⁸ disputed the qil'adars' continued claim that such prerogatives still rested with them.¹³⁹ A piece of land located on South Chittirai street, across from the temple and following local lore, given by TirumalaNayaka to his brother, had been put in the possession of Brahmans. At the time of the 'Carnatic government', a family of civil servants who built two houses on the property occupied a portion of the land. The other part, following

137. TNSA, Madura CR, Vol. 5340A, pp. 341–46, 31/01/1844.

138. OIOC, Madras Proceedings, PW, P/283/24, 8/04/1845, 284
(Consultation n°222 and 223 of 1843).

139. OIOC, MBRP, P/295/72, p. 6259, 29/06/1826.

the colonial conquest, became the 'cutcherry' of the Collector, Taken as a whole, these projects have had long-term effects. In 1862, the city of Madurai featured 'wide streets' and the English traveller C.R. Markham declared it to be the best-built Indian city.¹⁴⁰ Although it had experienced only moderate demographic growth, the city had new axes along which to develop. By the end of the nineteenth century, it had reached a population of 87,000. Until the 1930s, it remained largely confined to its new limits with the exception of an extension to the north of the river, facilitated by the construction of a bridge on the Vaigai in 1889, where the administration gradually settled.¹⁴¹ During the monsoon of 1843, during the height of the city's period of public works, cholera claimed 50 people per day. While cities in Great Britain were progressively developing an underground sanitation system in the course of the 1840s, more elaborate than their transportation system, the treatment of waste water and refuse as well as the availability of potable water remained inadequate in India until the end of the nineteenth century. After 1866 the city's inhabitants were wary of an institution that threatened to deprive them of a direct line to the figure of the Collector who continued to represent supreme authority, as the governors for the all-powerful kings of bygone days had done.

Madurai, "the festival city" has played a remarkable role in the political, social, economical, cultural and religious history of Tamil Nadu. It is also considered as the cultural capital and a seat of learning since time immemorial. The renowned temple of Lord Sundareswarar and Goddess Meenakshi form the nucleus of the city and a great source of attraction to every

tourist who visits South India over the centuries. The vast multitudes of tourists thronging the south consider their pilgrimage incomplete without a visit to this hallowed shrine. The architectural and aesthetic marvel of the massive structure, equally matched with the ancient puranic holiness and religious sacredness stands an irresistible majestic invitation to all both the religious and the non-religious.

